

IN THE NAME OF  
ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL

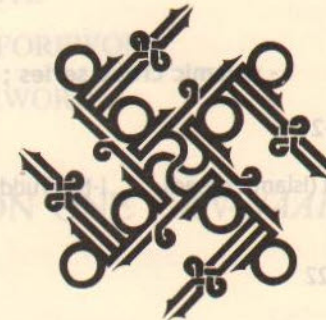


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# PARADISE AND HELL

In the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah

'Umar S. al-Ashqar

Translated by:  
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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Paradise and Hell is the crux issue of any religion. Paradise is the ultimate goal of every believing soul and the purpose behind all the struggles is to save oneself from the torments of Hell.

*Paradise and Hell* is the 3rd and last part of "The Final Day" series of Dr. Ashqar's 'Aqeedah Series (Islamic Creed Series). Dr. Ashqar has already earned wide reputation for his works on 'Aqeedah (Creed) series for his strict adherence to the original sources - the Qur'an and the Sunnah. *Al-hamdu lillah*, the book is well received by the readers both Arabic and English. This is the fourth improved and revised edition of the book with a number of corrections and additions in accordance with the later Arabic version. Realizing the importance of the topic and its authenticity, we are trying to present it in other languages too, and the French translation is ready to go to press. May Allah bless all the efforts of the writer, translator, editor, typesetter, proofreader and the publisher with acceptance.

*Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin Al Tuwaijri*

General Manager

International Islamic Publishing House

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How could Hell be other than we have described, when it is full of utterly indescribable torment, pain and grief? It is eternal and its inhabitants will remain there forever. Allah (ﷻ), has condemned them and their place in the Fire:

﴿إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ۝٦٦﴾

«Evil indeed it [Hell] is as an abode and as a place to dwell.»  
(Qur'an 25: 66)

﴿هَذَا وَابْنُ الطَّلَاحِ لَشَرِّ مَثَابٍ ۝٥٥ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَمِنْ أَلْهَادٍ ۝٥٦﴾

«This is so! And for the *Taaghoon* [transgressors, criminals...], - will be an evil final return [Fire], - Hell! Where they will burn, and worst [indeed] is that place to rest!»  
(Qur'an 38: 55-56)

## CHAPTER ONE

### PARADISE AND HELL HAVE ALREADY BEEN CREATED

At-Ṭaḥaawi said, in his book on *Al-'Aqeedah as-Salafiyah* (correct belief in accordance with that of the early generations of Islam - the pious predecessors) known as "*Al-'Aqeedah at-Ṭaḥaawiyah*": "Paradise and Hell have already been created. They will never come to an end or cease to exist. Allah, the Exalted, created Paradise and Hell before the rest of creation, and He created inhabitants for each of them. Whoever He wishes will enter Paradise by His grace and mercy, and whoever He wishes will enter Hell as a result of His justice. Every person will behave according to that for which he is created, and his destiny will be that for which he is created; good deeds and evil deeds are foreordained for all men."

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abu al-'Izz al-Ḥanafi remarked, in his commentary on this text:

"With regard to his saying that Paradise and Hell have already been created, *Ahl as-Sunnah* agree that Paradise and Hell have been created and are in existence at the present moment. *Ahl as-Sunnah* continue to hold this view. Stalwarts of the *Mu'tazilah* and *Qadariyah*<sup>1</sup> denied that. These groups said: Allah will create them (Paradise and Hell) on the Day of Resurrection. They said this because of their false arguments by means of which they seek to impose regulations on what Allah should do; they say it befits Allah to do this, or it does not befit Allah to do that. They compare Him to His creation and their actions. This is a kind of anthropomorphism with regard to deeds; they have

<sup>1</sup> *Mu'tazilah* and *Qadariyah*: sects that differed from mainstream Sunni Islam on numerous issues.



allowed the ideas of *Jahamiyah*<sup>2</sup> to creep into their thinking, and have become *mu'aṭṭalah* (those who deny that Allah can see, etc.). They said: "It does not make sense for Paradise to be created before the time of reward, because it will not be used or inhabited for a very long time. They rejected the basic texts that contradict their false notions they seek to project onto Allah. They misinterpreted the texts and accused those who disagreed with them of going astray and concocting innovations (*bid'ah*)."

Al-Ḥanafi then quoted from the Qur'an and Sunnah in support of the view that Paradise and Hell have already been created. For example about the Garden we read:

﴿... أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝﴾

﴿...[It is] prepared for *Al-Muttaqoon* [the pious].﴾

(Qur'an 3: 133)

﴿... أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ... ۝﴾

﴿...[It is] prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers...﴾

(Qur'an 57: 21)

And about the Hell we read:

﴿وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ۝﴾

﴿And fear the Fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers.﴾

(Qur'an 3: 131)

﴿إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ۝ لِلظَّالِمِينَ مَنَآبَا ۝﴾

﴿Truly, Hell is a place of ambush, a dwelling place for the *Taaghoon* [those who transgress the boundary limits set by Allah...].﴾

(Qur'an 78: 21-22)

<sup>2</sup> *Jahamiyah*: A sect of *Mu'tazilah* named after Jahn ibn Ṣafwaan.

﴿وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۝ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۝ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۝﴾

﴿And indeed he [Muhammad] saw him [Jibreel (Gabriel)] at a second descent [i.e. another time], near *Sidrat al-Muntaha* [lote-tree of the utmost boundary beyond which none can pass], near it is the Paradise of Abode.﴾ (Qur'an 53: 13-15)

The Prophet (ﷺ) "Blessings and Peace be upon him," saw *Sidrat al-Muntaha* (a tree in heaven), and near it the Paradise of Abode, as is mentioned by Bukhari and Muslim in the hadith of Anas (رضي الله عنه) (may Allah be pleased with him). At the end of this narrative of *Al-Isra'* (the Prophet's Night Journey), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Then Jibreel brought me to *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, which was veiled in colours indescribable. Then I entered Paradise, and its lights were of pearls and its soil was musk."

Bukhari and Muslim also reported from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"When any one of you dies, he is shown his position (in the Hereafter) morning and evening. If he is one of the people of Paradise, then he is shown the place of the people of Paradise, and if he is one of the people of Hell, then he is shown the place of the people of Hell, and he is told: 'This is your position, until Allah resurrects you on the Day of Resurrection.'"

According to a hadith narrated by Al-Bara' ibn 'Aazib, that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "A herald calls out from heaven: 'My slave has spoken the truth, so prepare for him a place in Paradise, and open a gate for him to Paradise.' The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: 'Then its good scent reaches him.'" Anas reported a hadith similar in meaning.

Muslim reported from 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that there was a solar eclipse during the time of the Messenger of Allah



﴿وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَحْبَبَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عَذَابَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...﴾



﴿And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire, and We have fixed their number [19] only as a trial for the disbelievers...﴾  
(Qur'an 74: 31)

Ibn Rajab said: "What is known and well-established among the earlier and later generations (*As-Salaf wal-Khalaf*) is that the trial came about when the number of angels was mentioned and the *kuffaar* thought that it was possible to kill them. They thought that they would be able to fight and resist them. They did not know that humankind in its entirety would not be able to resist even one of them."<sup>1</sup>

These angels are the ones whom Allah (ﷻ), called the guards of Hell:

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَتِهِمْ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنْ



﴿And those in the Fire will say to the keepers [angels] of Hell: "Call upon your Lord to lighten for us the torment for a day!"﴾  
(Qur'an 40: 49)

## CHAPTER THREE DESCRIPTION OF HELL

### 1 - The Location of Hell

The scholars differ as to where Hell is located at present. Some say that it is in the lower earth, others say that it is in the heavens, and yet others refrain from discussing the matter at all. This last group is correct, because there are no sound and clear reports that define the location of Hell. One of those who prefer not to discuss the matter at all is Suyuti. He said: "Do not discuss Hell, i.e., do not discuss where it may be located, for no-one knows this except Allah (ﷻ), and I know of no hadith that I could rely on with regard to this issue."<sup>1</sup>

Sheikh Shah Waliullah ad-Dahlawi says, in his '*Aqeedah*': "There is no clear text, which states their location (i.e. the location of Paradise and Hell). They are wherever Allah (ﷻ), wishes them to be, and we cannot comprehend all the universes created by Allah."<sup>2</sup> Şiddeeq Hasan Khan while commenting on these words of Ad-Dahlawi says: "I say: this is the best and most cautious of opinions, *insha Allah*."<sup>3</sup>

### 2 - The Vast Extent of Hell

Hell is huge and vast and immensely deep, as is proven by several things:

1) Those who will enter Hell are innumerable. In addition to the vast number of the disbelievers in Hell, the structure and makeup of only

<sup>1</sup> Şiddeeq Hasan Khan, *Yaqazat 'Uli al-I'tibaar*, Pp. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pp. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> *At-Takhweef min an-Naar*, Pp. 174.



one of them will be so huge that his molars will be as big as Mount Uhud, and the distance between his shoulders will be equivalent to three days' walking. Nevertheless, Hell will accommodate the huge number of *kuffaar* and evildoers who have existed throughout history, in spite of their huge size, and there will still be room for more, as Allah (ﷻ), says in the Qur'an:

﴿يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَنَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ﴾

«On the Day when We will say to Hell: "Are you filled?" It will say: "Are there any more [to come]?"»

(Qur'an 50: 30)

The Fire of Hell is like a mill to which are brought thousands upon thousands of tons of grain, which it grinds tirelessly until it is all done, then waits for more. In the hadith that describes the debate between Paradise and Hell, it says that Allah (ﷻ) said to Hell:

"You are My punishment; I will punish in you whomsoever I will.' Both Paradise and Hell will be filled, but Hell will not be filled until Allah places His foot in it. In another version it says: Until, Allah, the All-Glory and All-High, will put His leg and it will say 'Enough, enough!' Then it will be filled, and its different parts will come closer to one another. Allah will not wrong any one of His creation." Bukhari and Muslim reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).<sup>4</sup>

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"People will continue to be thrown into Hell, and it will continue to say 'Are there any more?' until the Lord of Glory places His foot in it. Its different parts will come closer to one another, and it will say 'Enough, enough, by Your glory and

<sup>4</sup> Jaami' al-Usool, 10/544.

honour!'" (Bukhari and Muslim)<sup>5</sup>

2) Another indication of its vast depth is the fact that a stone thrown from the top of Hell takes a very long time to reach the bottom. Muslim reports that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and we heard the sound of something falling. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

'Do you know what that was?' We said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'That was a stone that was thrown into Hell seventy years ago, and it is yet in the way in (to reach the other side of the) Hell until now.'"<sup>6</sup>

Haakim reports from Abu Hurayrah, and Tabaraani from Mu'aadh and Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If there was a huge stone as big as seven *khalfaat* stones, and it was thrown from the edge of Hell, it would fly through it for seventy years and yet it will not reach the bottom."<sup>7</sup>

3) Great number of angels will bring Hell forth on the Day of Resurrection. The Messenger (ﷺ) described how Hell will be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection, concerning which Allah (ﷻ), said:

﴿وَجَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ...﴾

«(And Hell will be brought near that Day...)»

(Qur'an 89: 23)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<sup>5</sup> Mishkaat al-Masabeeh, 3/109.

<sup>6</sup> Muslim, Kitaab al-Jannah, Baab fi Shiddat harr an-Naar (4/2184, hadith no. 2844).

<sup>7</sup> Shaheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer, 5/58, hadith no. 5124. Its isnaad is shaheeh.



“The *kaafir*’s skin will be forty-two cubits thick, and his molar will be like mount Uḥud, and the space he occupies will be as wide as the distance between Makkah and Madeenah.” (Tirmidhi)<sup>4</sup>

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The molar of the *kaafir* on the Day of Resurrection will be like Uḥud, and the thickness of his skin will be seventy cubits. His upper arm will be like *Al-Baydaa*’, his thigh will be like *Warqaan*, and the space he occupies will be like the distance between me and *Ar-Rabdhah*.” (Al-Ḥaakim and Aḥmad)<sup>5</sup>

This increasing of the *kaafir*’s body size will increase his suffering and torment. Commenting on the hadith narrated by Muslim on this subject, An-Nawawi said: “All of this is in order to intensify the suffering, and all of this is possible for Allah. We must believe in it because the truthful (Prophet) has told us about it.”<sup>6</sup> Ibn Katheer, in a comment on these hadiths, said: “So that their punishment and suffering may be more severe, as Allah (ﷻ), the Severe in punishment says:

﴿... لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ ...﴾

﴿...that they may taste the Penalty...﴾ (Qur’an 4: 56)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Mishkaat al-Maṣabeeh*, 3/103. The editor of *Al-Mishkaat* said: “It is narrated by Tirmidhi, who said: ‘it is a *ṣaḥeeḥ ḥasan* hadith,’ and I say its *isnaad* is *ṣaḥeeḥ*.”

<sup>5</sup> *Silsilah al-Aḥaadeeth aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah*, 4/94. Al-Albani attributed the authentication of this hadith to Al-Ḥaakim and Adh-Dhahabi, and agreed with them despite the fact that one of the narrators, Ibn Ishāaq, is *da’eef*. Al-Albani mentioned many other corroborating hadiths. *Al-Baydaa*’ could be the name of a mountain or it may refer to the well-known city in Morocco.

<sup>6</sup> *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 17/186.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Katheer, *An-Nihaayah*, 2/139.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE FOOD, DRINK AND CLOTHING OF THE PEOPLE OF HELL

The food of the people of Hell is *Aḍ-Ḍaree’* and *Az-Zaqqoom*, and their drink is *Al-Ḥameem*, *Al-Ghasleen* and *Al-Ghassaaq*.

Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ ۖ لَا يَسْنُوْنَ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمُ جُوعٌ﴾

«No food will there be for them but a bitter *Ḍaree’* obnoxious thorny plant, which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.» (Qur’an 88: 6-7)

*Aḍ-Ḍaree’* is a thorny plant known as *Ash-Shubruq* that grows in Hijaz. Ibn ‘Abbaas said: “It is a low-growing thorny plant; when it grows tall it is called *ḍaree’*.” Qataadah said: “It is one of the very worst types of food.”<sup>1</sup> This food of the people of Hell will be of no benefit whatsoever to them, and they will not enjoy it in the least; this is one of the forms of punishment that they will suffer. Allah, the Almighty, says:

﴿إِنَّ شَجَرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ ۖ طَعَامُ الْأَثَمِ ۖ كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ۖ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ﴾

«Verily the tree of *Zaqqoom* will be the food of the sinful, like molten brass, it will boil in their insides, like the boiling of scalding water.» (Qur’an 44: 43-46)

The tree of *Zaqqoom* is described in another *aayah* (verse):

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Rajab, *At-Takhweef min an-Naar*, Pp. 115.



Because admittance to Paradise and salvation from the Fire are according to Allah's will and judgement, it is a great victory and tremendous success, as Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿... فَمَنْ رُحِّجَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ...﴾ (١٨٥)

«...Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden, will have indeed attained the object of life [or: been successful]...» (Qur'an 3: 185)

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكَنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ (٧٣)

«Allah has promised to believers - men and women - Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein [forever], and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme felicity [or success].» (Qur'an 9: 72)

﴿... وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ (١٣)

«...And those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, to abide therein [forever], and that will be the supreme achievement.» (Qur'an 4: 13)

## CHAPTER ONE

### ADMITTANCE TO PARADISE

There is no doubt that the joy of the believers will be incomparable when they will be led to the blessed Garden of Paradise with all honour and dignity, group after group. When they reach Paradise, its gates will be opened for them, and they will be welcomed by noble angels congratulating them on their safe arrival after suffering so much hardship and witnessing so much horror:

﴿وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ﴾ (٧٣)

«And those who feared their Lord will be led to the garden in crowds until, behold, they arrive there: its gates will be opened and its keepers will say, "Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter here, to dwell therein [forever].» (Qur'an 39: 73)

In other words: your words, thoughts and deeds were good, so your hearts and souls have become pure, and for that you deserve Paradise.

#### 1 - Intercession with Regard to Entering Paradise

It is proven in the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith that the believers will stand for a long time on the Day of Recompense, asking the Prophets to plead to open the gates of Paradise for them. All of them will refuse in turn, saying, "I am not in a position to do that," until the matter reaches our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). He will intercede in the matter, and his intercession will be accepted. Muslim reports from Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:



﴿...such are the dwellers of Paradise. They will abide therein.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 43)

However, there is no conflict between these *aayaat* (verses) and the meaning of the hadith. The *aayaat* indicate that good deeds will be a reason, not the price, for admission to Paradise. The hadith says that good deeds are not the price for admission. Two groups were misled in this matter: the *Jabariyah*, who took the hadith to mean that the reward is not connected to deeds, because man has nothing to do with his deeds [i.e. everything is foreordained]; and the *Qadariyah*, who took the hadith to mean that Paradise was the price for good deeds, and man has the right to enter by virtue of his good deeds.

The commentator on *At-Tahaawiyah* said: "As for the idea that recompense results directly from one's deeds, the *Jabariyah* and *Qadariyah* are misled, and Allah, to Whom be praise, has guided *Ahl as-Sunnah*. The Arabic preposition *ba'* of negation (*nafyi*) is not like the *ba'* used for affirmation. The negation in the hadith "No one will enter Paradise by virtue of his deeds (*bi 'amaalihi*) is the *ba'* of substitution or exchange, as if good deeds were not the price of a man's admission to Paradise. This is like the (false) *Mu'tazili* claim that good deeds will give a person the right to enter Paradise, whereas the truth is that admission to Paradise is by the Grace and Mercy of Allah. The *bi'* in the *aayah*, ﴿...a reward for what they used to do [*Jaza'an bi maa kaanu ya'maloon*].﴾ (Qur'an 32: 17) is known in Arabic grammar as the *bi'* of causation, i.e. because of their deeds. But Allah is the Creator of cause and effect, so everything is referred back to His Grace and Mercy."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Sharh at-Tahaawiyah, 495.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE AND THE DELIGHTS THEY ENJOY THEREIN

The people of Paradise will enter Paradise in the most perfect and beautiful form, in the image of their father Adam (ﷺ), for there is no human form more perfect and beautiful than that of Adam, whom Allah (ﷻ), created very tall. He was as tall as a great palm tree, sixty cubits tall. Muslim reported from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, created Adam in his own image, sixty cubits tall... everyone who enters Paradise will be in the image of Adam, sixty cubits tall. People kept getting shorter and shorter after the time of Adam."<sup>1</sup>

Their external appearance will be in harmony, and their hearts will be as one. Their hearts and souls will be clean and pure. Muslim reported from Abu Hurayrah a hadith in which the Prophet (ﷺ) described people entering Paradise, including a group whose light will be like the full moon. He (ﷺ) said:

"Their form will be that of a single person, after the image of their father Adam, sixty cubits tall."<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of their beauty is that they will have no body hair, and will look as if their eyes are anointed with *kohl*. Each of them will enter Paradise aged thirty-three, the age of strength, vitality and

<sup>1</sup> Muslim: Kitaab al-Jannah, Baab Yadhkhul al-jannah aqwaam af'idatuhum mithl af'idat at-tayr, 4/2183, hadith no. 2841.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Baab Awwal zumrah yadhkuloona al-jannah, 4/2179, hadith no. 2834.